

District IV Commissioner Romney Rogers



Season's Greetings! Please allow me to wish you and all those close to you a joyous holiday season, a new year of happiness, and hope for a world at peace. It has been a privilege to serve as your district commissioner this year. Here is some news of interest.

Reapportionment – The City has been grappling with reestablishing geographical boundaries of the four City Commission districts so that, per Section 7.12 of the City Charter, the districts would be as approximately equal in population as is practical. Due to population growth, District IV had to lose some neighborhoods, and on Dec. 3, the Commission voted to approve the recommendations of the Reapportionment Committee with just one change.

Focus on District IV – The following data is from the City Manager's Office, Division of Neighbor Support (<http://www.fortlauderdale.gov/neighborsupport>), which processes "items," such as complaints, reports, and inquiries about day-to-day operations of the City. In 2012, 596 total items were received from my District IV Office and others. In

2013 (to Nov. 25), 590 total items were received from my office and others.

The City's 24-hour Customer Service Center logged approximately 220 calls in 2013 (to Dec. 9) specifically related to flooding at various locations throughout District IV.

Our Code Enforcement Division reports that for District IV in 2012, there were 2,715 Code Violations uncovered by City personnel, and 750 complaints of Code Violations reported by others (Total = 3,465 Code Violations). Also, there were 2,594 Code Cases uncovered by staff in 2012, and 622 complaints of Code Cases reported by others (Total = 3,216 Code Cases). For 2013 (as of Nov. 29), staff discovered 1,640 Code Violations; 845 were reported by others (Total = 2,485). There were 1,508 Code Cases uncovered by staff in 2013 and 702 reported by others (Total = 2,210). Note: Annual totals are not equal because there may be more than one Code Violation per Code Case.

Hardy Park – The new shade structures have been installed and are sure to be appreciated in warmer weather.

Native American Paddle Up – The Upper Room Art Gallery on East Las Olas was awarded \$30,000 in the 2013 Knight Arts Challenge competition. The project goal is to preserve the traditional art form of creating dugout canoes for a biannual Native American "Paddle Up" on the Himmarshee Canal. Seminole and Miccosukee canoes and tribal members in traditional dress will be featured. I was pleased to have endorsed the proposal.

Sun Trolley Downtown Expansion Route – I'm convening a Kick-off Meeting for this new Sun Trolley service. Local businesses and neighborhood representatives, especially along the South Andrews Corridor, are welcome to join us on Monday, Dec. 30, from 3:30 - 4:30 PM in the 8th Floor Conference Room at City Hall. A public awareness committee will be formed to publicize the availability of the new route to the Broward Health Campus, and how it can benefit both residents and employees in the area.

Pension Reform – On Dec. 3, the Commission agreed to a new police union contract, which will result in roughly \$161 million in lower pension costs over the next 30 years. During that timeframe, reduced pension benefits for new hires will save approximately \$67 million; moreover, slower salary growth from limited merit increases is anticipated to yield an additional \$94 million in savings. The new contract also provides that officers may be tested for drugs: 20% of them will be randomly tested in conjunction with physicals. Smoking by officers in City-owned vehicles is now prohibited, and new hires must be non-smokers. In addition, officers, who live outside Fort Lauderdale, will have to pay \$20 per pay period for a take-home car; those living out-of-county will pay \$60 to \$75 per pay period. These new take-home changes are expected to save the City \$310,000 per year.

Household Hazardous Waste – City residents are now invited to participate in free drop-off events at the following locations (we are partnering with neighboring communities):

- City of Coral Springs, 4181 NW 121st Ave., Saturday, Feb. 1, 2014, 9 AM - 2 PM
- City of Fort Lauderdale, 301 N Andrews Ave., Saturday, Feb. 8, 2014, 9 AM - 2 PM
- City of Coconut Creek, 4800 W Copans Road, Saturday, Mar. 8, 2014, 9 AM - 2 PM

Residents may review the guidelines here: http://fortlauderdale.gov/press_releases/2013/120313matt_hhww.htm.

Fort Lauderdale Currents – The December 2013 issue of the City's e-newsletter is now available online at <http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs177/1111345979625/archive/1115940113475.html>.

Event Calendar –

- **Downtown Countdown** is Dec. 31, 4:30 PM - 3 AM, SW 2nd ST between SW 2nd and SW 5th Avenues.
- **The Joint Commission/Historic Preservation Board Workshop** on the ordinance rewrite will be held on Jan. 6, 2014, at 7 PM in the 8th Floor Conference Room at City Hall (following my Pre-Agenda Meeting).
- **The Riverwalk Stone Crab & Seafood Festival** is set for Jan. 11, 11 AM - 5 PM, Esplanade Park.
- **Come Downtown and Dance the Night Away** on Jan. 18 from 6 - 10 PM, Esplanade Park.

➤ For appointments, please contact MJ Matthews at 954-828-5028 or mmatthews@fortlauderdale.gov.